



2008 Fact Sheet

Establishment and Significance

Authorized in 1956, Horseshoe Bend National Military Park was officially established as a unit of the National Park Service on August 11, 1959 by Presidential Proclamation. The park was established to commemorate the last major battle of the Creek Indian War (1813-1814) which took place within a horseshoe-shaped bend of the Tallapoosa River in what is now Tallapoosa County, Alabama. The Creek Indian War consisted of 17 battles with the final and most significant battle fought at Horseshoe Bend on March 27, 1814. In this battle 3,300 frontier troops and Indian allies under the command of Andrew Jackson defeated 1,000 Creek warriors who had fortified themselves behind a seemingly impregnable log barricade. More than 800 Creek Indians were killed, ending for all time the military power of the Creek Nation.

The key points to the Horseshoe Bend story are:

- Commemoration of the Battle and the people directly involved
- Development of means for the public to understand, appreciate, benefit from, and enjoy the park
- Preservation of the battlefield and associated landscape and features
- Interpretation of the cultural relationships and conflicts leading to the Creek War as well as the War's impact on the Creek Indian people
- Interpretation of the Creek War as it relates to the War of 1812 and on the western expansion of the United States
- Placing in context the role this war played in the career of Andrew Jackson and the development of our nation

Significance

The primary significance statements for Horseshoe Bend National Military Park are summarized as:

- The battle resulted in the forced emigration of the Creek People to Indian Territory (present day Oklahoma).
- The decisive battle led to the creation of the state of Alabama and westward expansion of the young United States.
- The battle established the prominence of Andrew Jackson.
- More Native American lives were lost in this battle than in any single battle with U.S. troops in the history of the United States.
- Horseshoe Bend National Military Park presents a unique venue for the interpretation of the history of the Creek people.
- Horseshoe Bend preserves one of the few War of 1812 sites that is open to the public and interpreted.

Location and Government

The park is located in east central Alabama, approximately fifteen miles from the town of Dadeville. Alabama State Route 49 passes through the park and carries commuters, industrial traffic such as logging trucks, and park visitors. Park traffic counters placed on Highway 49 tally over one million people passing through the park each year on this heavily travelled, two lane road. The park is approximately 40 miles from Auburn, Alabama (home of Auburn University), 60 miles from Montgomery, Alabama (state capital), 80 miles from Birmingham, and 100 miles from Atlanta (Southeast Regional Office of the National Park Service.) Horseshoe Bend is located in the Central Time Zone and the 256 area code.

The park is situated in Tallapoosa County and works most closely with the communities of Alexander City, Dadeville, New Site, and Daviston. Approximately 4300 people live within 15 miles of the park boundaries. Horseshoe Bend is within the Third Congressional District of Alabama.

Acreeage and Resources

Horseshoe Bend National Military Park consists of 2040 acres including approximately 500 acres of historic battlefield, 3 miles of river (Tallapoosa River), and the remainder forested primarily with second growth mix stand of vegetation typical to the southern Piedmont region. Other critical resources include:

- Thirteen documented archaeological sites and at least two Creek Indian village sites dating from the 18th century or earlier
- 354 known animal species
- 901 known plant species
- 20 structures
- 4 historic features on the List of Classified Structures
- 3 miles of paved roads and 12 miles of unpaved roads
- 3 miles of maintained trails
- 38,222 catalogued museum objects, primarily stored at the Southeast Archaeological Center in Tallahassee, Florida

Visitation

Other than the 1.0 million travelers on Highway 49 each year, visitation to use resources provided by the NPS at Horseshoe Bend National Military Park are:

- Approximately 70,000 users of the three mile Tour Road, Nature Trail, and general park grounds
- 15,000 users of a boat ramp providing access to the Tallapoosa River
- 25,000 users of the park Visitor Center
- 26,000 attendees at park programs, both onsite and offsite, including two major special events each year

This is a 7% increase in park visitation over the past decade

Budget and Staffing

The anticipated budget for fiscal year 2008 is \$785,000. This is a 17% increase in budget over the past five years. (2003 budget was \$669,000). These budget increases were primarily annual Congressional increases to all parks to cover cost of living adjustments and increases.

Park staffing is currently 10 permanent, full time employees. In years when a permanent position is vacant, the park uses the dollars to hire temporary employees to insure visitor and employee safety while providing for consistent resource protection. The park has received an increase in staffing of only two permanent full time positions in the last 15 years.

To supplement the minimal park staff, each year a crew of two to three Youth Conservation Corps employees are recruited from local high schools using special project funding provided by the NPS YCC funds. Additionally, over 3000 hours of volunteer time is logged by the park's volunteer Horseshoe Bend Militia, a group of gentlemen trained in black powder weapons safety who wear period uniforms and present military demonstrations to the public on a regular basis. These 3000 hours translate to \$53,000 savings to the park in salaries (at FY07 volunteer hourly value of \$17.50 per hour). The park receives only \$1000 each year from the NPS Volunteer Program to support volunteers. Additional volunteer activities are planned but difficult to develop due to lack of funding and staffing to adequately train volunteers and supervise the program.

Key Management Issues

- 2014 marks the Bicentennial of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. This conflict is a part of the larger War of 1812 history. Unfortunately, the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 and its associated events has not found a champion politically or regionally. The park lacks funding to mark this key anniversary in any way out of the ordinary.

- The park's 50th Anniversary as a unit of the NPS is marked in 2009. The park has requested funding through the Challenge Cost Share Program to partner with Auburn University to host a two day seminar that will bring international historians together for a series of lectures and a field trip to the park, as well as a publication of the proceedings. Funding has not been approved yet.

- The Centennial of the National Park Service occurs in 2016. The park has ideas for Centennial projects but lacks a fund raising partner such as a Friends group to raise dollars to be matched by Congress as a part of the Centennial Initiative. The park's proposed Centennial projects include:

- Development of a small outdoor amphitheater for presentations such as Creek dancing and military weaponry demonstrations during special events and as an outdoor classroom for field trips

- Addition of a 100 seat theater to the existing Visitor Center as the park has outgrown its tiny multi-purpose room (formerly office space) that seats only 20 people

- Improvement of the park's main picnic area to include restrooms, shelter improvements, and possible addition of small camping area for Scouts or similar special groups working on projects

- Increased recreational use of the park is managed as it occurs because the park lacks any overarching planning documents to provide long term direction, such as a General Management Plan